

Appl. No. 10/039,527
Amdt. dated April 21, 2004
Reply to Office Action of September 22, 2003

Claims 1, 6, 9 and 13 are amended as indicated. Claims 5 and 15-21 are cancelled. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended) In a method of making a reclosable bag, a method comprising:
~~A method of making a reclosable bag comprising:~~

feeding a zipper tape having at least one splotched portion past an optical sensor that optically detects opacity variations in said zipper tape;
optically detecting said splotched portion to produce a signal; and
actuating a cutter for cutting said zipper tape in response to said signal to create a selected portion of the zipper tape; and
sealing the selected portion of the zipper tape to a web.

Claim 2 (previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein said step of optically detecting said splotched portion includes the step of optically detecting zipper strip opacity variations and said step of optically detecting comprises determining a thickness of said splotched portion by changes in the opacity of portions of said zipper strip.

Claim 3 (previously presented): The method of claim 2 in which said step of determining comprises comparing said thickness of said splotched portion to a reference predetermined thickness of the zipper tape.

Claim 4 (original): The method of claim 1 further comprising splotching said zipper tape multiple times to create a series of splotches along the length of the zipper tape.

Claim 5 (cancelled).

Claim 6 (currently amended): A method for sealing a portion of a zipper tape to a web, said zipper tape having a splotch along the length of the zipper tape, said splotch having a thickness

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less than the zipper tape thickness and an opacity different than the zipper tape, the method comprising:

providing an elevator having a platform for receiving a portion of zipper tape;
depositing the portion of zipper tape onto the platform by feeding the zipper tape onto the platform and past an optical sensor that optically detects variations in the ~~thickness~~ opacity of said zipper tape, until said optical sensor detects a splotted portion in the zipper tape being fed;
positioning a web section above the platform;
positioning a sealing head over the web section for heating the web section; and
elevating the platform towards the web section until the portion of zipper tape on the platform comes into contact with the web section, thereby forming a seal between the zipper tape and the web section.

Claim 7 (previously presented): The method of claim 6 wherein said sealing head is in contact with the web section when the portion of zipper tape on the platform comes into contact with the web section.

Claim 8 (original): The method of claim 6 further comprising the step of perforating the web section.

Claim 9 (currently amended): The method of claim 8 wherein the web section [[if]] is perforated by a knife positioned above the web section.

Claim 10 (previously presented): The method of claim 8 wherein the web section is perforated prior to the portion of zipper tape on the platform being sealed to the web section.

Claim 11 (original): The method of claim 6 wherein the seal is substantially airtight.

Claim 12 (original): The method of claim 6 wherein the seal is substantially watertight.

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Claim 13 (currently amended): The method of claim 6 wherein the portion of zipper tape is created by feeding a zipper tape until a splotted portion crosses the optical sensor, thereby detecting said splotted portion to obtain a signal from the optical sensor, and cutting said zipper tape in response to said signal to create the portion of zipper tape on the platform.

Claim 14 (original): The method of claim 6 wherein the method is repeated to seal a plurality of zipper tapes to the web and further comprising the step of winding the resulting web onto a winder.

Claims 15-21 (cancelled).